

Combined Oral Contraceptive Pills



General information

- Combined oral contraceptive pills is a type of modern family planning method.
- You are required to take 1 pill everyday
- May cause irregular bleeding during the first few months of use after which users may experience lighter and more regular bleeding.
- It is safe for women who are living with HIV while on antiretroviral (ARV) medicines. Talk to your health care provider.

Effectiveness for pregnancy prevention:

- Pregnancy rate in the first year of use is less than 1 pregnancy per hundred women (1%) if used correctly, i.e. no missed pills
- About 8 pregnancies per hundred women (8%) if some pills are missed during the month.

How method works:

- Take 1 pill at the same time every day
- The pill contains small amount of the hormones estrogen and progestin that thickens the mucus around cervix thus stopping sperm from meeting an egg
- It also prevents ovulation (the monthly release of egg from the ovaries)

Important facts:

- You can stop any time you want to get pregnant.
- Does not interfere with sexual intercourse. You have to remember to take a pill once every day
- It does not protect against Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) including HIV
- Not advised if breastfeeding a baby less than 6 months old

Discuss with your provider if you:

- Are breastfeeding an infant less than 6 months old
- Smoke cigarettes and are 35 years and above
- Have high blood pressure or other medical conditions affecting the heart, blood vessels or liver
- Have history of breast lump or family history of breast cancer
- Have a disturbing headache (migraine) that does not go away with pain relief medicine.
- Take medicine for seizures (convulsion)



How to use:

- Begin with the first pill in the packet today after a negative pregnancy test
- Take 1 pill everyday until you finish the packet
- Take the pill at the same time everyday
- If you vomit within 2 hours of taking a pill, take another pill from your packet as soon as possible. Continue taking the remaining pills at the usual time.
- Have a new packet of pills on hand before you finish your 28-day packet
- If you get your pills from a pharmacy, use the instructions in the brochure.

Return to the health care facility anytime if:

- You have questions or problems
- You have missed 3 or more pills, had sex in the past 5 days, and want to avoid pregnancy.
- You develop any health problems
- You think you are pregnant

NOTE:

After one pack of pills is finished, start the next pack on the very next day without a break

Follow these guidelines if you miss 1 or more pills:

If you:	Do this:
Missed 1 or 2 pills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take a pill as soon as you remember • Keep taking pills as usual (you may end up taking 2 pills at the same time or on the same day)
Missed 3 or more pills in the 1st or 2nd week of pill cycle -OR- started a new packet 3 or more days late	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take a pill as soon as you remember • Use a backup method (condoms) or avoid sex for the next 7 days • If you had unprotected sex in the past 5 days consider taking Emergency Contraceptive Pills (ECPs) (See ECPs flier)
Missed 3 or more pills in the 3rd week of pill cycle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take a pill as soon as you remember • Finish all hormonal pills in the packet. For a 28-pill packet, throw away the 7 non-hormonal pills at the end of the packet • Start a new packet the next day • Use a backup method (condoms) or avoid sex for the next 7 days • If you had unprotected sex in the past 5 days consider taking ECPs (See ECPs flier)
Missed any non-hormonal pills (last 7 pills in 28-day pill packet))	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discard the missed non-hormonal pill(s) • Keep taking the pill, one each day, start the new packet as usual.

